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~~SECRET NOFORN~~NIO/EUR
2 September 1986THE ANTI-AMERICANISM PROBLEM IN EUROPE

Last week community analysts on Europe met here to discuss emotional anti-Americanism in West Europe and attempt to distinguish it from the major policy problems which widen Atlantic differences.

One consensus conclusion was that a lengthening list of security and trade issues are likely to crowd the short-term agenda but could remain essentially manageable. But there was concern that the political dialogues in Allied states threaten to pose new difficulties in arresting the waning trust and confidence between West Europe and the US.

- Allied officials frequently are favorable to, or at least understanding of, US positions in private. But in public they shy from defending those positive attitudes for fear of being attacked as too pro-US. (Prime Minister Thatcher is simultaneously the exception to the behavior pattern and the best example of the political damage sustained by overtly supportive allies.)
- The key Allies -- the UK, FRG, France and Italy -- face scheduled elections by 1988 or earlier. The opposition (especially the left in the UK and the FRG) will try to concentrate on those foreign policy issues which contrast local and US interests most sharply in their effort to seize the tactical high ground.

In combination, these factors could make the public agenda in West Europe more openly hostile to US interests -- at a time when a US election campaign would dramatize West European criticism for US audiences.

Another major new factor is the extent of negative European reactions to US budget cuts.

- The European left will argue that the cuts demonstrate a lower priority for Europe and prove an immediate need for West Europeans to trim their dependencies on US leadership.
- Parties in power would be hard pressed to defend pro-US views in the event of a deterioration in US concessions -- like the "two-way street" arms deals -- under budgetary restraints and/or protectionism.

If we are right, the conduct of our relations with Europe over the next few years will be more than usually fraught with risk of misinterpretation and misrepresentation.

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